

FACT SHEET TWENTY SIX

KETAMINE

What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is a strong anaesthetic used for operations on animals and humans, it is short acting and comes in a variety of forms. The injectable liquid form is how it is produced for use in medicine, illegally it is more likely to be found in a white powdered form, which is smoked or snorted or as tablets for oral use.

Although the liquid is invariably a pure form of the drug, tablets and powders can often be 'cut' with other substances. The price depends on the purity and the source of the drug but can range from £10-20 per gram. Pseudonyms for Ketamine include green, K, special K, super K or vitamin K.

The Effects of Ketamine

As well as having an anaesthetic effect, which render some people incapable of moving, Ketamine also has hallucinogenic effects similar to LSD which results in perceptual distortions. Users often report out of body experiences and a feeling of detachment from the people around them, these hallucinogenic effects are more often felt at the higher doses. At lower doses rushes and energetic bursts accompany the euphoria brought on by the drug.

The Side Effects of Ketamine

The side effects of Ketamine are dose dependent. Users often experience numbness, muscle spasms and an inability to move due to the anaesthetic properties of the substance, the pain numbing effect leaves individuals in danger of sustaining serious injuries, which could be life threatening, without being aware. It also causes nausea and vomiting, which is dangerous if the person is unconscious.

Ketamine can also cause disorientation and problems with co-ordination, it's use may lead to anxiety, panic attacks and depression and should be avoided particularly by those with pre-existing mental health issues. Tolerance, needing more of the drug to get the same effect, is acquired quickly with Ketamine and psychological dependence may occur.

It is extremely dangerous to mix Ketamine with alcohol and other drugs that depress CNS function, the combined effect on the body is to shut down vital functions such as breathing or vital organs such as the heart and lungs leading to unconsciousness and death.

In heavy users loss of appetite and weight loss has been reported. Long-term use may lead to flashbacks, psychosis, visual problems and memory and attention deficits.